

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action mailed December 13, 2004, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration. To further the prosecution of this Application, Applicants submit the following remarks, have canceled claims and have amended claims. Applicants pray that, after consideration of these remarks, a favorable decision will be provided regarding the claims. The claims as now presented are believed to be in allowable condition.

Claims 1-43 were pending in this Application. By this Amendment, claims 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 13, 19, 20, 22, 31, 37 and 43 have been canceled. Applicants expressly reserve the right to prosecute such at least some of the canceled claims and similar claims in one or more related Applications. Accordingly, claims 1, 2, 5, 7-9, 12, 14-18, 21, 23-30, 32-36 and 38-42 are now pending in this Application. Claims 1, 8, 15, 16, 17, 24, 25, 26, 32 and 38 are independent claims.

Objections to the Specification

The Examiner objected to the disclosure because of certain informalities. These informalities have been corrected. Accordingly, the objection to the specification is believed to have been overcome.

Allowed Claims

Claims 15, 24 and 25 have been allowed. Claims 5-7, 12-14, 16, 21-23, 37 and 43 were objected to as being dependent on a rejected base claim but were deemed allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim 1 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 3, 4 and 6; therefore claim 1 is believed allowable. Claims 2, 5 and 7 depend from claim 1 and are believed allowable as they depend from a base claim which is believed allowable.

Claim 8 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 10, 11 and 13; therefore claim 8 is believed allowable. Claims 9, 12 and 14 depend from claim 8 and are believed allowable as they depend from a base claim which is believed allowable.

Claim 16 has been amended to correct typographical errors as suggested by the Examiner. Claim 16 is now believed allowable.

Claim 17 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 19, 20 and 22; therefore claim 17 is believed allowable. Claims 18, 21 and 23 depend from claim 17 and are believed allowable as they depend from a base claim which is believed allowable.

Claim 26 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 31 therefore claim 26 is believed allowable. Claims 27-30 depend from claim 26 and are believed allowable as they depend from a base claim which is believed allowable.

Claim 32 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 37 therefore claim 32 is believed allowable. Claims 33-36 depend from claim 32 and are believed allowable as they depend from a base claim which is believed allowable.

Claim 38 has been amended to include the limitations of claim 43 therefore claim 38 is believed allowable. Claims 39-42 depend from claim 38 and are believed allowable as they depend from a base claim which is believed allowable.

Rejections under §112

The Examiner rejected claims 7, 14, 16, 23 and 38-43 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter. Claims 7, 14, 16, 23 and 38 have been amended to provide proper antecedent basis for certain elements and to correct other discrepancies. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 7, 14, 16, 23 and 38-43 is believed to have been overcome.

Rejections under §102 and §103

Claims 1, 8 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,854,889 to Liese et al. (hereinafter Liese). Claims 2-4, 9-11 and 18-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Liese in view of applicant's admitted prior art. Claims 26-36 and 38-42 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over applicant's admitted prior art in view of Liese.

Applicants respectfully traverse each of these rejections and request reconsideration. The claims are in allowable condition.

Independent claims 1, 8, 17, 26, 32 and 38 have been amended to include the limitations of certain dependent claims deemed allowable, and are therefore believed allowable. Claims 2, 5, 7, 9, 12, 14, 18, 21, 23, 27-30, 33-36 and 39-42 depend from claims 1, 8, 17, 26, 32 or 38 and are believed allowable as they depend from a base claim which is believed allowable. Accordingly. The rejections under §102(b) and §103(a) are believed to have been overcome.

Conclusion

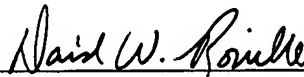
In view of the foregoing remarks, this Application should be in condition for allowance. A Notice to this affect is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes, after this Response, that the Application is not in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to call the Applicants' Representative at the number below.

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Applicants hereby petition for any extension of time which is required to maintain the pendency of this case. If there is a fee occasioned by this response, including an extension fee, that is not covered by an enclosed check, please charge any deficiency to Deposit Account No. 50-0901.

If the enclosed papers or fees are considered incomplete, the Patent Office is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned collect at (508) 366-9600, in Westborough, Massachusetts.

Respectfully submitted,



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